

CONGRESSMAN JIM MORAN'S HEALTHY KIDS ACT (H.R. 4053)

SUMMARY

The **Healthy Kids Act** will provide critical federal leadership to address the childhood obesity crisis by establishing an Office of Childhood Overweight and Obesity Prevention and Treatment (COOPT) within the Department of Health and Human Services. The Director of this office will be the federal government's champion on this issue and will be charged with evaluating the effectiveness of existing policies, programs, and research efforts, identifying future needs, and supporting the implementation of a comprehensive, long-term, national campaign to prevent overweight and obesity among our children and youth.

One of the Director's key tasks in helping children adopt healthy eating patterns and understanding their nutritional needs will be to work with the Secretary of Agriculture to identify three categories, or tiers, of foods and beverages—healthy, acceptable and no nutritional value. The food tiers will be used by the Secretary of Agriculture to update the food standards for foods and beverages available to schoolchildren. Finally, the bill establishes that counseling and treatment services for overweight and obese children are eligible for reimbursement under the Medicaid and SCHIP program.

REP. MORAN ON WHY THIS LEGISLATION IS URGENTLY NEEDED



“Nationwide obesity has reached epidemic levels. As the prevalence rises, so has the cost. In 2008, we spent in excess of \$100,000,000,000 on health care associated with overweight and obese Americans. Even more troubling is that this condition is appearing at an increasingly early age. Over the past 3 decades, childhood obesity has skyrocketed. The rate of obesity has more than doubled for children aged 2 to 11 years and more than tripled for adolescents aged 12 to 19 years. Current data shows that 32 percent of children are overweight, 16 percent are obese, and 11 percent are extremely obese.”¹

“In low-income populations, some racial and ethnic groups, and among recent immigrants, the rates of obesity among children and youth are alarmingly high. Overweight and obese children are at much greater risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, asthma, and other diseases than their non-obese peers, and many are subjected to ridicule and bullying that damages their emotional well-being.”

“We can, and we simply must, make addressing childhood obesity a national priority. Not only must we help the children who are already affected, we must not fail to protect another generation. Health is more than the absence of physical or mental illness – it is also the extent to which children and youth have the capacity to reach their full potential. Childhood obesity is a public health crisis that will not be solved without the full support of the federal government.”

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention

FINDINGS BY THE CDC¹

- Rates of obesity have more than doubled for children aged 2 to 11 years
- More than tripled for adolescents aged 12 to 19 years
- 32 % of children are overweight
- 16% are obese
- 11% are extremely obese
- In some racial and ethnic groups, in low income populations and among recent immigrants the rates of obesity among children and youth are even higher.
- Obese children are at risk of growing into obese adults who do not participate fully in the workforce because of employment discrimination, lost productivity due to illness and disability, and premature death.
- If the childhood obesity epidemic continues at its current rate, conditions related to type 2 diabetes, such as blindness, coronary artery disease, stroke, and kidney failure, may become common conditions of middle age

KEY DETAILS

Role of the Director of Office of Childhood Overweight and Obesity

- Promote and supporting school wellness policies, provide parents with information on health and nutrition, and implement age-appropriate physical activity programs.
- Consider the unique needs of racially and ethnically diverse groups and high-risk populations, including low-income populations and communities.
- Take advantage of the expertise of the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Defense, Interior, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation, as well as the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Chairmen of the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission.
- Implement Federal support measures for State, tribal, and territorial programs; and carry out a comprehensive, long-term, national campaign to prevent overweight and obesity among our children and youth
- Work with the Secretary of Agriculture to update the current standards for foods and beverages available to schoolchildren outside the federally supported school meal programs.

(Continued)

The Healthy Kids Food Tier System

An Upside-down Triangle

- ▼ **Tier 1** Foods and beverages, which are healthful for children and adolescents and the consumption of which is encouraged
- ▼ **Tier 2** Foods and beverages, which do not exceed levels of total, saturated, and trans fat, sugars, and sodium that are acceptable in a healthful diet for children and adolescents
- ▼ **Tier 3** Foods and beverages, which do not contribute to a healthful diet for children and adolescents and the consumption of which is discouraged

The food tier system will function to:

- Form the basis for regulations issued by the Secretary of Agriculture updating the current standards for foods and beverages available to schoolchildren outside the federally supported school meal programs. This approach to the would allow schools to retain the revenue stream from sales of competitive foods by offering healthful options, and would send the message that certain foods should be enjoyed as treats, not as part of the daily diet.
- Form the basis for guidelines issued by the Director in consultation with the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission to control the marketing, advertising, or promoting of foods and beverages to children and children and adolescents.
- Form the basis of regulations issued by the Chairman governing how foods and beverages may be advertised, promoted, or marketed to children.

Food Marketing Guidelines

- The Healthy Kids Act will facilitate the establishment of federal guidelines to control the marketing, advertising, or promoting of foods and beverages to children and adolescents.

CO-SPONSORS

Reps. Emanuel Cleaver (MO-5), Gerald Connolly (VA-11), Elijah Cummings (MD-7), Marcia Fudge (OH-11), Bill Pascrell (NJ-8)

*Congressman Moran is Co-Chair of the Congressional Prevention Caucus